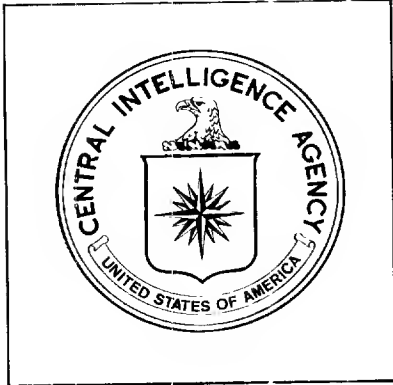


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STAFF NOTES:

**Middle East
Africa
South Asia**

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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

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USSR-Bangladesh

Soviets Receive Bengalee Envoy

1 The Bengalee government sent a special envoy
to Moscow last week for three days of talks with
Soviet officials. The visit seems to have been
intended mainly to reassure the Soviets that the
2 new government is sincere about wanting to continue
to cooperate with Moscow.

3 Up to now, at least, the Soviets seem to have
been of two minds in assessing the import of recent
events in Bangladesh. The Soviet who heads the
Pakistan-Bangladesh section at the Oriental Studies
Institute recently told a Western official that
the coup was the result of a personal vendetta be-
tween Mujib and the coup leaders (this was indeed
one of the causes of the coup) and that there was
no significant external involvement. He was quite
relaxed about China's early recognition of the new
government, arguing that the coup had probably
advanced it only by a matter of months.

3 The chief of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's
South Asian Division took a less sanguine line. He
hinted that the majors who had instigated the coup
were working for "someone" and wondered aloud why
China, after waiting three years, had chosen the
present moment to recognize Bangladesh.

3 The Foreign Ministry official was new to his
job and has spent most of his career on Far East,
not South Asian, matters. His remarks are, however,
more in keeping with Soviet press coverage of the
Bangladesh situation since the coup and probably
reflect views held by other influential people within
the USSR. Moscow has dealt with the new regime as
though nothing had changed, but it has kept up a
steady drumbeat of propaganda to try to ensure that
2 the new Bengalee government hews closely to Mujib's
foreign policies. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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